A COMPARATIVE EXPLORATION OF HARD-OF HEARING STUDENTS EXPERIENCE IN TRADITIONAL FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE CLASSROOMS

Siti Salmiah Muhammad
Universiti Sains Islam, 71800, Malaysia
Email: msalmiah@usim.edu.my, Tel: 012-296 2894

Ismail Sheikh Ahmad
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa, 53100, Malaysia
Email: drismail@iium.edu.my, Tel: 019-783 4799

Sulaiman Hashim
Universiti Islam Antarabangsa, 53100, Malaysia
Email: sulaimanh@iium.edu.my, Tel: 012-220 5741

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a comparative exploration of the experiences of hard-of-hearing students in traditional classrooms and online classroom within the context of higher education in Malaysia. As educational institutions increasingly adopt online learning environments, understanding how students with hearing impairments navigate these changes is crucial for promoting inclusive education. The study, based on a case study approach, involves eight hard-of-hearing students from selected Malaysian universities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, and self-journal writing. The research explores key themes such as communication accessibility, social interaction and peer communication, instructor interaction and supports, classroom environment and distractions as well as visuals and learning materials employed. Findings reveal that while online classrooms particularly asynchronous design offers flexibility and access to multimedia resources, they also present significant challenges, such as unreliable captioning and limited real-time interaction. In contrast, traditional classrooms provide opportunities for immediate communication and face-to-face support but often lack adequate accommodations. The study highlights the need for more consistent and effective accommodations across both learning environments to ensure equitable access to education for hard-of-hearing students. Practical recommendations include improving the quality and availability of captioning and embedding sign language and interpretation, enhancing training for instructors on inclusive teaching strategies, and exploring hybrid learning and flipped classroom models that combine the benefits of both online and traditional formats. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of how different educational settings impact the academic experiences of hard-of-hearing students and provides valuable insights for improving accessibility for students with hearing impairment in Malaysian higher education.

Keywords: Online, Face-to-Face, Hard of Hearing, Inclusive.

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